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ABSTRACT

This competency-based teacher education module focuses on decision making. It is stated that in this module the participant will make a tentative commitment toward a certain course of action, receive feedback from his/her surroundings and peers as to the adequacy and appropriateness of the commitment, then reshape the commitment into a different form as he/she learns more about himself/herself and environment. The module centers around an activity called the "In-Basket." In this activity the participant is given information about an imaginary situation through a series of letters, memos, notes, and other material. He or she is then asked to make a decision from a teacher's point of view. (JA)

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Competency-Based Teacher Education

ED100802

EMPORIA KANSAS STATE COLLEGE

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AFFECTIVE

9.0

Decision Making III

Compiled by:

G. Robert Ward

Sherry B. Borgers

University of Houston

AFFECTIVE 9

I. IDENTIFIERS

A. Module name:

Decision Making III

B. Compiled by:

1. G. Robert Ward

2. Sherry B. Borger

C. Area:

Affective

D. Number:

9

II. PROSPECTUS:

A. Rationale:

Frequently the affective area is neglected by decision makers because of their own values. In this neglected area, feelings and motivations of individuals are often not considered. However, if we are to live and teach in a democracy where the human potential and relationship is valued, then the ability to make decisions within these areas becomes important.

> "Democracy is an ideology which above all others demands that its practitioners be masters of skills of human relationship adequate to help groups of people make intelligent decisions concerning the changing problems that confront them.... without appropriate and experimentally tested skills and methods for building efficient cooperative relationships, democracy has no hands and feet."[1]

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[1]Faculty of the Training Laboratory in Group Development. "A Laboratory in Educational Dynamics." School and Society. 66:475-476, December 20, 1947

Decision making of any kind, from the simplest to the most complex, should not be considered a static commitment but rather an ongoing process where you are becoming and maturing. As a person you will discover yourself and you will become aware of your needs, desires, and responsibilities; with this change and growth, your commitment to yourself and others will change and grow. Instead of committing yourself in an inflexible way, you should look at the decisions which will affect your immediate or distant future as a series of "developmental tasks" which aside from preparing you for a particular situation will enable you to merge your life and work into a meaningful union.

B. Purpose:

Central to the concept of decision process is the idea of flexible thinking which includes input, feedback, and output. You are to make a tentative commitment toward a certain course of action, receive feedback from your surroundings and peers as to the adequacy and appropriateness of your commitment, and then reshape your commitment into a different form as you learn more about yourself and your environment. The end result joins choice, thought, and action.

C. Overview of Module:

1. At home complete In-Basket,
2. Form group of 8-12 persons and participate in In-Basket, and
3. Submit final group In-Basket decision and rationale to instructor.

D. Terminal Objectives:

The terminal objective is exploratory in nature. Upon completion of this module you will have made a tentative decision, participated in activities designed to allow you to work with and to receive feedback from your peers, and reached a group decision.

E. How to Complete Module:

In this module you have the opportunity to focus on decision making. Although the module begins with your completing the activities at home, you then come together as a group and a) make a decision, b) receive feedback from peers, and c) reconsider the decision cooperatively as a group.

III. PREREQUISITES:

None

IV. ENABLING OBJECTIVES:

None

V. PRE-ASSESSMENT:

None

VI. ACTIVITIES:

A. General Instructions:

This decision making activity provides an opportunity for you to increase your ability to make decisions. It may be used or misused, depending on you. There is no right or correct response to the activity. Focus on the material provided for you. Do not attempt to decide whether you are correct.

If you do not invest yourself, you will get little from the activity. It may be superficial or it may have real meaning; this depends on you. Remember what you receive from this activity depends on how much you put

into it.

> If you have questions, if you have concerns, or if a particular task seems to be difficult for you, please contact the instructor. Remember to complete the module as honestly as possible so that you can gain the maximum benefit from the suggested activities.

B. Specific Activities:

9.1 In-Basket:

You are about to take part in an activity called the In-Basket. In this activity you will be given information through a series of letters, memos, notes, and other material. You are to make a decision from a teacher's point of view.

a. Identify the relevant facts in each situation; try to separate these facts from your biases. Then consider these facts and make a meaningful decision.

b. Identify the key problems which are presented. You will have to decide what is most important; identify which problems are long range and which require immediate action.

c. You should make brief notes about proposed solutions and actions. You may wish to make notes as you read the letters, memos, notes, and other material. There is no one correct solution to the problems. The key to a correct solution is that it should be defensible action when discussed with your group.

d. Your name is Eugene Zimmerman, and you have been team teaching at Jefferson High School

for the past 7 months, long enough to become acquainted with the problems of team teaching in the Open Concept school. Your work has been very satisfying, and you personally have found the Open Concept to be very exciting and challenging. You feel that the new approach has generally been well received by the majority of the teachers, but there have been some problems in adjusting to the new method. A few teachers have not been able to adapt to this way of teaching. Most of the students like this open and free atmosphere and seem enthusiastic about their participation in the program. You are unusually young for your position and relatively inexperienced. You graduated from one of the better universities in the nation offering courses in the Open Concept. Jefferson High School recruited you specifically because of your strong recommendations and educational preparation. Your schooling included extensive work in Competency-Based Teacher Education leadership, organizational analysis, and human behavior. You have found your education to be invaluable for the work that you are doing; however, some of the staff members seem to resent you because of your age and your dynamic and enthusiastic approach to teaching.

e. Key staff members:

Richard Mencke is the principal of Jefferson High School. He was previously a teacher of a

school in the North where they had been using the Open Concept method of teaching for five years. He was recruited to develop the Open Concept method at Jefferson High. This is his third year, and the new method of teaching is not progressing as smoothly as he had planned.

John Saunders has taught vocational education to most of the parents of the present student body. He has recently been moved from his teaching position to the position of a counselor. He conducted his classes in a traditional way and is now counseling in a similar manner. Some of the slower students seem to come to John for counseling although the "grapevine" has it that these students come to him because he does not demand anything from them and that he is one person within the building who understands the problems which confront them daily. John's work is considered below average by the administration, and they have tried to place him in a position where he has little influence.

Ronald Sancho is the first Chicano to join the staff. He was hired last fall due to the district's mandate to have the minorities represented. Although he was better qualified than the other applicants, he was the only Chicano interviewed. His activity in the civil rights movements adds to the relevance of his history classes. Most of the students like him both as a teacher and as a person. His amenability has helped him with his team teaching assignment

this year and has placed him in a leadership capacity with more responsibility. His wife has accepted a position as librarian with the school. Her salary can be saved to enable Ronald to continue his graduate studies in Administration in a couple of years.

Fritz Levinsky is a psychology teacher who came from the same university as you. In fact, the two of you had taken all your human dynamics classes together. Fritz had helped you in preparing for these classes. You recommended that he be employed by Jefferson High School. You felt that Fritz could contribute much to the growth and understanding of the Open Concept because of his dynamic personality and liberal philosophy of teaching.

Helen Doyle has her M.A. in English from the local university. She has completed all her graduate hours during summer and evening classes and completed her thesis in Shakespeare. She is a young attractive single girl with a tremendous interest in the academics. Her studiousness has won her the admiration of her brighter students but has given her some trouble working with the liberal arts team. She is too impatient, too theoretical, and does not perform well when working with others.

Donna Mack is the HPE teacher for the girls' track team. She is one of the more personable staff members of the school. The students respect

Donna, and whenever a student wants to talk with someone about a personal problem he usually goes to her. She has the reputation of being fair, honest, and quite insightful. Her ability to relate to both boys and girls has been helpful to the school since the move from the traditional method of teaching to the new Open Concept method of teaching. She has been able to help some of the students make the change. The students feel that she is one person they can trust.

f. The situation:

You have just returned from a conference in Chicago where you spent the past three days attending a workshop on the Open Concept. Today is the last day of school prior to Spring vacation. You are glad to be back from the conference and looking forward to the vacation because this break will allow you time to work on some new ideas and strategems that you learned while attending the workshops. This pleasant feeling is abruptly changed when the principal's secretary asks you to come to the office. She informs you that the principal, Richard Mencke, wants to talk to you on the telephone. Richard tells you that he is ill and will be out for several days. He also tells you that he just learned of a mix-up in the mail--several items of urgent business were mistakenly placed in the storage cabinet. He then asks you if you will take care of this crisis. Probably the mix-up happened

Monday, and some of the mail is a week old. In view of the principal's illness and the upcoming break, you realize that you must respond to this crisis immediately. Due to your heavy schedule you will have a limited time to manage the present situation. You will only have time to personally interact with one person, to make two telephone calls, and to write one letter. Respond only to those items that you feel demand immediate attention. Now read the following letters, notes, and other material. After you have read the materials, determine the person with whom you would personally speak, the two persons whom you would telephone, and the one person to whom you would write. In a brief statement give the rationale for your decision. You are to complete the In-Basket activity individually.

March 21, 1972

Dear Mr. Mencke:

You must be aware of the respect you've generated in this community by your obvious good intentions, good will, and sincerity. If not, let me assure you that you have the community's respect and my own. So it is difficult, but necessary, for me to request and be prepared to insist that my children be transferred to the nearest traditional school.

Mark has been put into a situation of intolerable strain between the demands of the coach for an all-out competitive attitude and those of the new psychology teacher who requires behavioral proof that competitiveness ought to be eradicated and replaced with sensitivity to others. One can scarcely "co-operate" in "competitive" sports. Although this is Mark's senior year, not the best time to transfer to a new school, he's so caught between the conflicting demands of these two teachers that he, with his father's and my support, has decided that a transfer is the only practical solution.

Although Cara's situation is not as acute, she also felt strain from two conflicting approaches to human relationships and responsibilities in the school as it is presently organized and staffed. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, she decided that a transfer at this time is best for her so that she can get acquainted now and then really enjoy her junior and senior years.

Perhaps you are already aware of this; ours is not the only family set upon removing their children from this divided environment. Richard, I'm truly sorry if this move of ours embarrasses you, but we are determined and will take whatever steps are necessary. I hope no additional one will be.

Adamantly yours,

Mrs. Clinton Von Ralston, III

Mrs. Clinton Von Ralston, III

To: Richard Mencke

From: _____

Re: Drugs

Peggy Armstrong told me that her mother wrote to you about some things Mr. Levinsky was supposedly saying to his students. I thought you should know that Peggy is making up these stories to protect herself. She is afraid that her parents suspect her of using drugs, and she is trying to involve Fritz so that she can have an excuse for her behavior.

Actually Peggy is using him so that her parents will feel that it was through the influence of one of our teachers that their daughter became a user and possibly a pusher. I am not signing my name because I prefer to remain anonymous and not become involved.

March 20, 1972

Dear Mr. Mencke:

This letter appeared in our local newspaper two nights ago. After reading it, I became concerned and asked John, our counselor, if the article was based on fact. His response was, and I quote: "How should I know?" I am sending you the relevant part of the letter.

A Jefferson High School
Teacher

Letter to the Editor:

Who's gifted? What's the cut-off point? Wilt Chamberlain among the Watusi is just one of the boys. The United States Congress wants a counselor to be a wise man, who with shrewd and penetrating questions and tests, ferrets out the bright students and wisely sends them to Yale, Harvard, and MIT. They believe that if we get enough of these counselors circulating, we'll keep ahead of Russia. Parents would be scandalized if they knew what counselors were really up to.

Counseling should stand for nonconformity, for people being themselves, for an occasional bright person becoming a beachcomber instead of working on another push button that might blow us up. If counselors do not promote nonconformity, we might as well have students coming off of an assembly line with a U.S. Government stamp on their backs: GRADE A, GIFTED.

March 14, 1972

Dear Mr. Mencke:

I would like to set a trap for some of the "pot pushers" whom I believe are spending time on your school grounds. In order for me to obtain the information which I need to press charges against the pushers, I will have to plant some of my detectives among your students; also I will need the co-operation of some of your students who are willing to work with the detectives.

I am sure your co-operation in this endeavor will be to the best interest of all those concerned. I will personally come to your office on April 3rd to discuss putting my plan into effect. I would appreciate it if you could have some interested students in your office at 10:00 A.M. so that I can brief them on my plans and acquaint them with my detectives.

I am counting on your co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

Felix Smith

Felix Smith
Chief of Police

March 17, 1972

Dear Richard:

Several of my students have informed me that Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Levinsky have plans to hold group confrontation sessions immediately following the regular school day. I'm sure that you are aware that my track team meets during this time, and you know that I have two students who are preparing for the Olympic Games. I am extremely disturbed that you are allowing this conflict of interests to take place at this most critical time of the year. It seems to me that my track team, and especially the chance we have this year of placing two of our outstanding athletes on the Olympic team would take precedence over group counseling.

This human awareness approach is predominating everything since we moved to the Open Concept method of teaching, but somehow you must put your values into the proper perspective; I personally feel the time is now. Everyone cannot be self-actualized, and you should know that better than I.

I will appreciate your taking care of this matter so that I will not have to make an issue out of it.

Thanks,

Donna Mack

Donna Mack

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Thanks,

Donna Mack

Donna Mack

March 17, 1972

Dear Mr. Mencke:

This may not be the proper way to approach this situation; however, due to the circumstances, I felt that I needed to bring a certain matter to your attention. In saying the things that I have to say to you, I do not want you to feel that I am in any way anti-Semitic. However, the situation that I am concerned about is that several members of my congregation have asked me to do something about Mr. Levinsky playing the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" to his classes.

I personally believe that the rock opera borders on blasphemy and sacrilege. I object to the fact that it leaves out the Resurrection. If there is no Resurrection, there is no Christianity. At the same time, I also think that the opera asks questions that millions of our young people are asking such as: "Jesus Christ, are you who they say you are?" If the opera causes religious discussion and causes young people to search their Bibles, to that extent it may be beneficial. But I do not personally endorse the rock opera, nor do I urge by congregation to see it.

I trust that you will talk this matter over with Mr. Levinsky and tell him of our solemn concerns before I have to take this up with the school board. You know how sensitive these people can be about such matters, and I felt perhaps he might react better if you approached him as a friend and immediate supervisor rather than asking the board to say something about it.

Your help will be appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Billy Lewis

Reverend Billy Lewis

March 23, 1972

Dear Dick:

Knowing that you like Shakespeare, I thought you would be interested in seeing the production of "Much Ado About Nothing" which is playing at Jones Hall this weekend. I have two tickets for the Saturday night performance which starts at 8:00 P.M. and would like to give one of the tickets to you if you are interested.

I would appreciate hearing from you by Wednesday so that I can make plans accordingly.

Sincerely,

Helen

Helen Doyle

March 20, 1972

Dear Mr. Mencke:

I am writing to you concerning some disturbing things my daughter has been telling me about Mr. Levinsky, a psychology teacher. According to her, he feels that students should become acquainted with hallucinatory types of drugs because they allow one's mind to become open and to become free. He disagrees with the government being so strict about these drugs and feels that the human being will remain incomplete and stay in his neurotic state. He further suggests that it is up to this generation to bring about the new revolution that has to come in order to free mankind from his shackles.

You know that Mr. Levensky is a young, dynamic man who can influence our children both with his charm and his intellect. So far he has had the overwhelming support from everyone, but now I feel that he has gone too far and is out of touch with the proper values that he should be teaching to students.

If I do not hear from you by Friday, I will assume that you do not agree with the seriousness of this matter, and I will be forced to take formal action with the PTA. The PTA meeting is coming up the second week in April; please inform me of your decision. I will deeply appreciate hearing from you concerning this situation.

Sincerely,

Georgia Armstrong

Georgia Armstrong
Chairman of the PTA

March 16, 1972

Dear Mr. Mencke:

I am tired of keeping this problem to myself and refuse to be intimidated because you're in some "high" position.

Donna Mach, the HPE teacher at your school, has the audacity to keep my daughter Valerie after school for the track team. Does she think of anything except her team? No, she does not even consider the fact that I have two babies to care for and need Valerie at home to help!

Are you aware, Mr. Mencke, that these kinds of things are going on in your school, or do you just sit in that office all day and shuffle papers? Well, it is time that someone got concerned about these things, and if you do not care, perhaps your superintendent will.

I expect immediate results--Valerie is not to be kept after school anymore.

Mrs. Sylvester

Mrs. Sylvester

March 21, 1972

Dear Richard:

Just a note to remind you that this Saturday night is the Minority Citizens for Better Schools meeting. Your participation in the last meeting was very favorably received, and my friends felt that your presentation really helped several of the minority groups to see that the school is interested in their children.

This committee may well be the most important thing that has happened to this community in its attempt to solve the minority problem. We both know how imperative it is for this problem to be resolved in such a manner that no one is damaged.

If it is at all possible, please attend this coming meeting which will begin at 8:00 P.M. in the library of the Unitarian Church. There are many people in this community who would appreciate your attendance. In fact, I would like to pick you up around 7:30.

Sincerely,

Ron

Ronald Sancho

9.2 Form a group of 6-10 persons and discuss your In-Basket answers. Then as a group decide which person you will telephone, which two people you will write letters, and which one person with whom you will personally speak.

VII. POST-ASSESSMENT:

Submit the final group In-Basket decision with a brief rationale and the names of the group members to the instructor.